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Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

6005th meeting

Wednesday, 29 October 2008, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Zhang Yesui	(China)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Belle
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2008/622)

Letter dated 15 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2008/655)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-57476 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2008/622)

Letter dated 15 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2008/655)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; and Ms. Inés Alberdi, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Sarah Taylor, Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/622, containing the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security. I should also like to draw attention to document S/2008/655, which contains a letter dated 15 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the subject of this meeting.

I now give the floor to the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Ms. Rachel Mayanja.

Ms. Mayanja: It is an honour for me to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2008/622). I welcome the leadership shown by the People's Republic of China in holding this open thematic debate during its presidency, a testimony to its commitment to gender equality and the full involvement of women in all peace processes. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for affording me this opportunity to address the Council on the critical theme of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

The report before the Council (S/2008/622) provides an assessment of the progress and challenges in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and measures taken by Member States, United Nations entities and civil society, including best practices, to improve the capacities of Member States.

Over the past years, some important progress has been made in mainstreaming a gender perspective into the overall peace and security architecture, making it more sensitive to women's needs and concerns. This Council has addressed various aspects of women and

peace in its thematic debates and discussions of country-specific conflict situations on its agenda. The adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) earlier this year marked a new milestone in fighting sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. The Council recognized sexual violence as a security problem that requires a systematic response.

I commend the Council for its efforts in ending sexual violence. We must maintain and build on the momentum created by resolution 1820 (2008); by General Assembly resolutions 62/133 on the elimination of all forms of violence against women and 62/134 on eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence; by the Secretary-General's Unite to End Violence against Women campaign, launched on 25 February 2008; and by many other initiatives of the United Nations system.

There have been undoubted gains in many of the broad areas for action set out in the resolution, namely, awareness of the importance of gender equality, development of national action plans, gender mainstreaming, capacity-building and support for the greater participation of women in decision-making and nation-building, including in elections and governance. Significant gains have been made in gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

More attention to gender equality is being paid in peacebuilding. Civil society has been active in the national implementation process, holding governments accountable and injecting new dynamism into societies. However, a noticeable gap between policies and implementation of the resolution remains, in particular, at the national level. We have a long way to go in ensuring women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Only ten Member States have developed specific national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and five more are in the process of developing such plans. The capacity of the United Nations system to provide coherent, timely and demand-driven support to Member States must be significantly enhanced.

The report (S/2008/622) contains a number of action-oriented recommendations to fill those gaps, calling for more gender-sensitive conflict prevention and early warning, stronger focus on means to prevent or deter sexual violence, dispatch of missions of the Council to assess situations where sexual violence is being used as a tactic of war and consideration of targeted sanctions on individuals or parties to conflict carrying out widespread or systematic sexual violence.

The report also recommends strengthening the mandates of peacekeeping operations to prevent sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, providing peacekeeping operations with adequate resources, more systematic gender mainstreaming in security sector reform and the rule of law, and increasing the use of Arria formula meetings.

Allow me to make a few comments on women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, as mandated by resolution 1325 (2000). Women are most affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations. They experience war and conflict in different ways compared to men; as victims of rape, trafficking, sexual slavery and forced prostitution as well as, in some instances, as perpetrators of violence and participants in conflict.

But they are also a driving force for the prevention and management of conflicts. They are peacemakers and advocates for peace and national reconciliation. They are single heads of households and principal caregivers. Drawing on shared values of security, women come together around shared concerns — obtaining wells and schools, community health, nutrition and care for children and the elderly. They engage in confidence-building programmes across communities and play a key role in fostering reconciliation, both during conflict and after.

Women's networks mobilize women across party lines and are sometimes able to build consensus around peace proposals. Women are among the strongest advocates of transparent and accountable governance. In addition, they increasingly create national coalitions and international networks for peace and democracy, building blocks for sustainable peace and gender equality.

However, despite their successes, women continue to be marginalized and ignored. How can we harness the full force of women's agency in the peace and security sphere? That may be done first, by increasing women's representation at higher levels of decision-making, and secondly, by ending gender-

based violence against women. As the Secretary-General's report clearly stated,

> "Only when the basic need for personal security is met can one begin to consider participation in public life ..." (*S/2008/622, para. 5*)

Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, that force can be harnessed by breaking out of our old peace paradigm to make the peace process more accountable and inclusive of women and their concerns. We cannot afford to have more than half of the world's population continue to be excluded from the strategies of peace and security. To engage those resources requires a fundamental shift in our thinking. It must become unthinkable not to have women integrally involved in every stage of peace and post-conflict reconstruction processes.

It is our duty and indeed our obligation to millions of women in conflict areas to use the opportunity offered by Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) to set in motion perhaps one of the most promising approaches to conflict resolution of the new century — a comprehensive approach based on inclusive values and gender equality.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Mayanja for her statement. I now give the floor to Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Le Roy (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me as well to address the Council to review the progress made in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). It is no exaggeration to say that, in the eight years since its adoption, resolution 1325 (2000) has changed the way we manage peacekeeping operations. From our planning processes to the principles guiding development, training, staffing and operational priority-setting, we are ensuring that gender issues within those areas are accorded due consideration and priority. The resolution has, moreover, galvanized women in post-conflict countries to demand greater accountability from us to respond to gender issues during post-conflict transitions.

Whether in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Kosovo or in the Côte d'Ivoire, women have sought to establish regular channels of communication with the leadership of our missions. For our part, we have sought to standardize that practice of regular consultations between women's groups and mission leadership through a recently-issued checklist for senior managers, which underlines their personal responsibility for implementing resolution 1325 (2000). Indeed, we as peacekeepers understand all too clearly that our efforts to avoid conflict relapses in fragile post-conflict countries can only succeed if we ensure that all members of society have an equal stake in safeguarding the peace dividend.

The theme of this year's open debate, "Women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security" serves as an important reminder of one of the core principles that underlines resolution 1325 (2000), namely, that women in post-conflict countries are not merely victims of war, but agents of change with immense contributions to make to establishing policy priorities. In the peacekeeping context, the clearest entry points to support women's participation in decision-making are of course through the political process and through the reform of security institutions.

(*spoke in English*)

In recent years, we have supported the participation of women in elections in a number of countries including Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Liberia and Nepal. In most cases, we have facilitated an unprecedented registration of female voters. We have also seen significant progress in the election of women to political office, both local and national, particularly in situations where we have worked with political parties and national authorities to adopt constitutional quota guarantees for women, such as in Afghanistan, Burundi and Nepal.

Our experience through those processes has taught us that it is not enough to have women voting or being elected to office. The bigger challenge is ensuring that women in elected offices stay in those positions and that they help implement gender-sensitive policies. In Timor-Leste, for example, four women parliamentarians quit within three months of their election to office in 2002. To create an enabling environment for women's political participation, we must therefore first invest in providing technical support to those who are unfamiliar with constitution-making and with the working of formal political procedures and legislative processes. That is as true today for the Democratic Republic of the Congo as it is for Nepal.

Secondly, we must support networking platforms and cross-party caucuses for women in political office to enable them to strengthen their power base in advocating for gender-sensitive laws. In Timor-Leste, for example, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) are supporting cross-party representation of women to fight discriminatory practices against women in politics.

Thirdly, we must provide training support to women politicians as well as their male counterparts to ensure that they promote legislation on issues of direct concern to women. In the lead-up to elections in Burundi in 2005, our gender unit facilitated strategic planning sessions between some women running for electoral office and peacekeeping personnel from rule of law and human rights components in order to support them in setting priorities for addressing issues of real concern to women at the grass-roots levels.

Fourthly, our role as standard-setters requires that, in all negotiations with national authorities, we underline the importance of women's participation. In Darfur, continued appeals by the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for women's participation in the peace process have defined a space for women to express their views and encouraged rebel groups and the Government to have women in their negotiating teams. Exercising our standard-setting role also requires that we have more women in senior positions both within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support and at the field level in peacekeeping missions.

We have made some modest progress in that regard over the past year. As the Council knows, at the Headquarters level, the appointment of Ms. Susan Malcorra to the post of Under-Secretary-General for Field Support has enabled us to maintain gender balance at the highest level of decision-making in peacekeeping. At the D-2 level, three new women have been appointed in the past year: Ms. Donna Maxfield, as Chief of Staff; Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, as Director of the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division; and Ms. Margaret Carey, as Director of the Africa Division. Our first female Deputy Police Adviser, Ms. Anne-Marie Orler, has also recently been appointed to the Police Division. At the field level, we have also appointed two women as Deputy Special Representatives in the past year: Ms. Rima Salah, to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad; and Ms. Leila Zerrougui, to the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That brings to six the current number of women Special Representatives and Deputy Special Representatives in our peacekeeping missions.

Our experience in peacekeeping has also underlined the importance of supporting women's leadership aspirations in situations where we have a mandate to support security sector reform. For example, the percentage of women recruited to the police sector in such missions has been higher than the global average, which is presently under 10 per cent. Yet in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Kosovo, the percentage of women in the police force averages between 12 and 20 per cent.

The lessons from this are clear. First, targeted outreach to enhance the recruitment of women to the security sector and the use of special measures to offset women's qualification gaps, as in Liberia, have proven successful. Secondly, increased representation of women in the police can facilitate greater attention and responses to sexual and gender-based violence in the post-conflict period. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the commendable work of Major Honorine, a female police officer who heads a women and children protection unit in South Kivu, is greatly contributing to efforts to combat sexual violence against women and girls. Similarly, in Liberia, we have observed that increased recruitment of women to the police sector is facilitating more serious attention to sexual violence crimes and helping to change the attitude of male officers to dealing with such crimes.

Both of these examples demonstrate how the presence of women in the police can enable better responses to gender-specific crimes in post-conflict environments. The presence of women in Darfur as Chief of Security and as Deputy Commissioner in UNAMID is also sending a positive signal to local women and State authorities about women's capacity to successfully exercise leadership in non-traditional professions.

Thirdly, just as in the political arena, the retention of women within security institutions requires investment in building support networks to enable them to combat discrimination, sexual harassment and marginalization within low-ranking jobs. In working to promote gender-sensitive policing practices, DPKO has

recently issued gender guidelines to enable United Nations police in peacekeeping missions to address gender concerns in the advisory, mentoring and training support they provide to local police in post-conflict countries. We have also recently joined forces with UNIFEM and United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict to develop guidance to better assist military peacekeepers in protecting women and girls from sexual violence.

However, increasing the number of uniformed peacekeeping personnel to better respond to operational priorities remains a challenge. To reverse the trend, we need troop- and police-contributing countries to nominate greater numbers of women, particularly as military observers and police officers. That will ensure that we reach out better to women in the local population in our areas of operation. It would further enable us to respond more effectively to gender-related challenges, such as sexual violence crimes. Women peacekeepers also serve as role models and standard-setters for local women. We have seen evidence of that across all our missions.

We count on the cooperation of Member States to enable us to lead by example. It is an unfortunate fact that we have yet to appoint a woman to a force commander or deputy force commander position in any peacekeeping mission. I would like to challenge Member States to nominate women to future senior military appointments in our missions and I will proudly report on that next year.

(*spoke in French*)

Another important lesson we have learned to date is that our strategy for advancing women's leadership in peace processes must incorporate support for women's civil society organizations. Women in civil society can critically help women who are elected to political office to more effectively advance women's rights in post-conflict situations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the adoption of a law on sexual violence in 2006 was facilitated in a large part through strategic partnerships between women parliamentarians and women in civil society. In Liberia, women in civil society have been key allies in awareness-raising and outreach activities aimed at recruiting more women to the Liberian National Police.

In conclusion, through the efforts carried out in the development of policy and of guidance and training norms, we have sought to better assist peacekeeping missions in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Over the coming year, we will make it a priority to monitor the effective implementation of all the guidelines on gender and peacekeeping that we have issued, while also continuing to revise our policies to take into account the lessons learned from our experience on the ground.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the full commitment of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to cooperating with the Council as it oversees the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) during the coming year. I strongly urge the Council to take women's participation and contributions to peace processes into account when it decides upon the mandates of peacekeeping missions, undertakes field visits, requests briefings from the leadership of peacekeeping missions, and reviews periodic reports from our missions. The commitment of Members will allow for enhanced opportunities for the exchange of views beyond this single annual gathering.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Le Roy for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, Ms. Inés Alberdi.

Ms. Alberdi: I thank you, Sir, for the honour of this invitation to address the Security Council on the issue of women's participation in maintaining and promoting peace and security. This thematic focus permits us to stress that women's engagement in peacebuilding does not start when the fighting stops.

Gender issues must be addressed in conflict prevention and mediation, in the deployment of peacekeepers, in integrated missions, in stabilization and in post-conflict recovery. That is to say, for women to participate effectively in promoting peace and security, gender-responsive peacebuilding must begin from the first moments of conflict resolution.

That is particularly important in conflicts in which sexual violence is used as a tactic of war. Unless women's security is a primary objective of peacekeepers and systematic abuses of women's rights are made a primary focus of judicial responses, the seeds are sown for an incomplete and possibly unsustainable peace. That is because if abuses of women's rights are tolerated through de facto impunity

for perpetrators, efforts to restore the rule of law lose their credibility.

It is important to note that the Security Council has clearly acknowledged that point in resolution 1820 (2008). In recognizing sexual violence as a tactic of war that is used to crush opposition, subordinate communities and silence women, that resolution expands on resolution 1325 (2000). It acknowledges that there is no security without women's security. If sexual violence is a security problem, it requires a security response from the earliest moments of peacekeeping. We trust that the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/622) on resolution 1820 (2008) will provide practical steps to strengthening women's security.

Other security institutions are making the connection between women's security and peacebuilding. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was pleased to support a meeting of the French presidency of the European Union (EU) this month to improve the linkage between resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) and their implementation in EU security, police and justice missions.

Women's participation in conflict prevention, community reconciliation and respect for the rule of law cannot be left to a post-conflict phase. It must be addressed from the start. Business as usual will not do.

The rest of my remarks address points where practices in peacemaking, peacebuilding and building sustainable peace must change.

Regarding peacemaking, the impact of the public physical presence of women in peace processes should not be underestimated. UNIFEM recently reviewed official figures on women's participation in peace talks. While data are hard to obtain, as negotiations are sensitive, we found that women averaged 7 per cent of negotiators in the five comprehensive agreements for which data was available. They averaged 24 per cent of official observers in three recent peace processes for which data was available. They barely figure at all among appointed envoys, mediators and facilitators.

That does not tell the whole story, of course, since women's peace networks are constantly engaging in peace processes on a more informal basis. An example is the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace, which UNIFEM has supported since 2005. The Commission has developed a shared vision of a resolution to the conflict, but has no means by which to interject that vision into the official process. That illustrates why more rigorous implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is so important. We are pleased that International Women's Commission members are here today and that, on Friday 31 October, they will participate in an informal briefing of Council members hosted by the Government of Belgium.

However, women's participation in peace processes must not be left to informal initiatives on the margins. Peace talks must accommodate a structured representation of women's concerns and interests. International institutions supporting conflict mediation must have gender experts and must propose concrete methods to bring women to peace talks. During the past year, UNIFEM supplied a gender adviser to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Uganda to support gender sensitivity in the work of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs there. There should be gender advisers in all mediation efforts.

Today's political leaders are often peace mediators of the future, so the recruitment of women mediators depends on the numbers of women in public office. UNIFEM's experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of special quotas to promote women in leadership roles, notably in post-conflict Rwanda, where, since September, women comprise 56 per cent of the National Assembly members.

With regard to peacekeeping, women's needs for protection during and after conflict are different from those of men and often require a specific protection response. This year, UNIFEM collaborated with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, supported by Canada and the United Kingdom, to identify such a response. Former force commanders and police commissioners from peacekeeping missions were asked to identify tactics to enable them to detect imminent attacks on women and children and to prevent those attacks. New doctrine, guidelines, procedures, incentives and even force composition and equipment are required to ensure that practices on the ground are changed. UNIFEM, DPKO and the United Nations Action initiative are now field-testing an analytical inventory of best practices in protecting women and children — a task that will be

finalized next spring for use in training uniformed personnel.

If measures are not taken to prevent the widespread and systematic targeting of women, that violence can spill over into the post-conflict environment. We know that, in some contexts, attacks on women increase after conflict. If a country and the international community fail to prevent and punish violence against women, it pushes up the cost of peacebuilding. The cost is in delayed stabilization and reconciliation in countries where the rule of law cannot take root. Such costs and the delay of real peace can be avoided through decisive and early action to signal an end to impunity.

With regard to peacebuilding, recovery and peacebuilding require gender-responsive institutional reforms to ensure that women benefit from the peace dividend as much as men. Justice and security institutions are the first on the list, but efforts are also needed to ensure that institutions for economic recovery develop women's productive capacities and that social service institutions respond to their needs.

Currently, there are few means for women to identify and track funds allocated for their recovery needs. At the third meeting of the Sudan Consortium in May, UNIFEM and the Initiative for Inclusive Security partnered with the Government of Norway to support the participation of women leaders from diverse civil society groups in the Sudan. In their own analysis, less than 2 per cent of the over $2 billion that has been pledged to date has targeted women's empowerment.

Women's experiences of early recovery and peacebuilding demonstrate that there must be structured representation of women at all post-conflict donor conferences and that a mechanism to track funds dedicated to women's empowerment and recovery should be in place in all humanitarian and post-conflict development funds.

We look forward to seeing these issues addressed in the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on early recovery and in all United Nations peacebuilding and recovery efforts. Let us work together to ensure that women's voices are heard in peacebuilding at both national and international levels.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Alberdi for her statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Sarah Taylor, Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Ms. Taylor: I thank the Security Council for the invitation to speak here today and to continue the valuable practice of engaging and hearing from civil society. I am speaking on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, a coalition of international civil society organizations formed in 2000 to advocate for a Security Council resolution on women, peace and security. With the adoption of resolutions 1325 (2000) in October 2000 and 1820 (2008) in June of this year, we now advocate for the full and effective implementation of those resolutions and for the particular concerns of women in conflict-affected situations to be addressed consistently and substantively by the United Nations system and by Member States.

Eight years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), there has been a great deal more talk about the protection and promotion of women's human rights in conflict-affected situations. There has been much progress across a broad range of issues, and many new actors are now positively engaged in driving forward this agenda. However, in many areas action and implementation have been inconsistent.

It is now necessary to move from words to action. It is now necessary to move from ad hoc approaches, and towards ensuring that the intentions reflected in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) become a systematic and regular part of the work of the Security Council, of the United Nations system and of all Member States.

In resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council was certainly quite clear in its intentions regarding women's participation. It stressed

> "the importance of [women's] their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution". (*resolution 1325 (2000), fifth preambular paragraph*)

It recognized that women's "protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of

international peace and security" (*tenth preambular paragraph*).

That commitment to women's full and equal participation is more than an abstract concept. To discharge this mandate requires concrete action. Concrete action is required to ensure women's right to actively participate at all levels of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Concrete action is also required to address the substantive issues that women in specific country situations identify as priority concerns.

The NGO Working Group takes this opportunity today to focus on three critical areas deserving particular attention: first, the underrepresentation of women in peace processes; secondly, the underrepresentation of women in the United Nations system; and thirdly, the need to ensure that women are fully involved in the design and implementation of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement (DDRRR) programmes.

To the first point, as regards peace processes, recent statistics compiled by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) are staggering and bear repeating. Since 2000, women constituted, on average, 7 per cent of the negotiators in five major United Nations peace processes. Fewer than 3 per cent of the signatories in 13 peace talks were women. It is not enough to acknowledge the right of women to participate in peace processes. Mediators and negotiators, and donor Governments, must address the very real obstacles to women's physical presence at the negotiation table and in behind-the-scenes or after-hours negotiations. For example, in practice, women in such situations are often not members of the warring parties coming to the table, and many will not have access to the resources made available to those parties. Women may have family obligations that men do not have. In order, then, to participate on an equal footing with men, women may need support for childcare, they may need money for transportation and accommodation, and they may need help with their personal security.

While there have been some important initiatives by UNIFEM and by others — in northern Uganda, for example — to pay attention to these issues and to support women, the support needs to be systematic and needs to be integrated in all peace processes. Within the United Nations system, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is a key player. But, the lack of a funded and well-supported gender adviser unit in that department is limiting. Gender units in other entities, such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, have proven a positive influence. It has now been four years since the Secretary-General recommended the establishment of such a gender unit in DPA, and we look forward to Member States helping that happen. We also look forward to progress being made on the creation of a well-resourced women-specific United Nations entity with the capacity and the presence at the operational level to further drive these efforts.

As to the second point, United Nations efforts to help ensure women's participation in peace processes must also take place at home, which brings me to the issue of leadership within the United Nations. Women are dramatically underrepresented in the 30 missions of the United Nations and should be appointed to more leadership positions. The new appointments to posts of deputy special representative of the Secretary-General are laudable. However, it is unacceptable that those are some of the only examples of appointments of women in high-level leadership. It is also unacceptable that the all-female police contingent in Liberia is seen as such a novelty. In addition to reforms needed at the national level to enable more women to participate in these United Nations missions, there should also be a clear and transparent process for Member States to submit names of women to the Secretary-General for appointments to high-level posts.

The presence of women at the field level, particularly in leadership, encourages other women and girls to participate and lead; it demonstrates that peacekeeping missions are committed to including all voices; and it is shown to both decrease sexual and gender-based violence and to increase the reporting of occurrences of sexual violence. Sexual violence is not an issue disconnected from the issue of participation. The stark reality is that those affected by or living in fear of sexual violence are less able to participate in political processes and have less access to the justice system. Member States must increase the number of women in the judiciary and legal professions in conflict-affected situations as a means of increasing women's access to justice and ending impunity for sexual and gender-based violence.

In Afghanistan, for example, the Government, the United Nations and donors must direct the necessary resources to meet the benchmarks of the National

Action Plan for the Women in Afghanistan on women's participation in official bodies. Impunity for violence, in particular sexual violence, is directly counter to the rule of law and thus, ultimately, to peace.

The link between violence and participation then is also relevant in key processes in the transition from conflict, which brings me to our third area of concern.

A short survey of recently ended conflicts shows that women's issues are more often than not neglected in conflict-transformation policies, such as those related to the rule of law and justice reform. In these conflict-transformation processes, continued violence against women essentially means a continuation of the conflict, sometimes even with the same weapons. Often, laws passed as part of reconstruction do not prioritize the issue of small arms and violence against women, and do not recognize that gun-related domestic violence increases during and after conflict. When DDRRR issues are raised during negotiations, it should be seen as an opportunity to recognize the impact of these laws on women and to recognize that these laws can break the continuing cycle of violence against women and ensure their meaningful participation in the transformation of their society.

That is what the commitments of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) are about: the transformation of society. It is now eight years after resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted by consensus in this Council Chamber, and women need to see results. By working to ensure the creation of a well-funded gender unit in DPA and the appointment of women to senior United Nations leadership positions, and to ensure that reconstruction legislation takes women into account, the Council will be taking concrete action to ensure women are truly present in all aspects of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Finally, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security thanks Council members for their time and attention here today. As they move forward with their daily work in the Security Council, with their daily work as States Members of the United Nations and at the national level, and with their daily work within the United Nations system, members should ask themselves these three questions: Where are the women? Why are they not part of these processes? What can I do to change this?

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I am honoured to speak also on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President, please allow me to thank you for taking the initiative to hold this eighth open debate on women and peace and security, which enables the Security Council to continue its regular review of this important theme.

I would also like to thank Ms. Mayanja, Mr. Le Roy, Ms. Alberdi and Ms. Taylor for their presentations, which show their real and ongoing commitment to the cause of women.

Resolution 1325 (2000) sets forth the significant impact on conflict of the participation of women on an equal footing with men in society and in decision-making processes, on the one hand, and of the protection of women from violence and violations of their rights, on the other hand. These two factors have a great influence not only on preventing conflict but also in determining the playing out of conflict and during reconstruction and post-conflict phases. It is thus not only legitimate but also essential for the Security Council to continue to deal with the place and condition of women as it deals with security and peacekeeping situations internationally, complementing the actions pursued by other United Nations organs, entities, funds and programmes to promote the situation of women.

The European Union welcomes the publication of the Secretary-General's annual report on women and peace and security (S/2008/622) and on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). This report shows that the cumulative efforts of United Nations agencies and departments, regional organizations, Member States and civil society have helped to raise the awareness of the whole United Nations system about the specific needs of women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. It also illustrates that it has been possible to adopt a more comprehensive approach to implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

The European Union welcomes, in particular, the following points in the report. The Union is pleased to note the fact that regional organizations have committed to implementing resolution 1325 (2000). Beyond the European Union, such commitments have been made the African Union, as well as by subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The European Union also welcomes the definition and implementation of national action plans by a growing number of countries, including countries directly affected by the issue of women in armed conflicts. Another positive note is the important role of local non-governmental organizations to promote the participation of women in elections in post-conflict contexts. Finally, we welcome the fact that a growing number of troop-contributing countries were able to increase the percentage of women in their peacekeeping contingents.

I would also like to stress the greater focus placed on sexual violence in armed conflicts, as shown by the creation of new instruments such as the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, or the joint project of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on gender-based violence data collection.

Although we must commend the progress made since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and particularly the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) last June, these two resolutions are still far from being fully implemented. Today, we have a very alarming situation for women in North Kivu, Darfur and regions affected by the fighting of the Lord's Resistance Army, which is proof of this fact.

The European Union is deeply concerned that, in great majority of cases, women remain absent from peace negotiations. Moreover, the European Union would like to denounce once again the unacceptable character of sexual violence — often used as a tactic of war — with tens of thousands of women as its victims every year. Resolution 1820 (2008) recognized that sexual violence undermines the restoration of peace and security.

The European Union regrets that the Secretariat did not include a more detailed section in its annual report on the impact of conflicts on women, and, more broadly, that women's issues continue to be insufficiently reflected in the country reports submitted to the Security Council despite the Council's repeated requests to this effect. The European Union therefore encourages the Secretariat to surmount these problems when drafting its forthcoming reports. In particular, the European Union is expecting a detailed and action-oriented report next June on sexual violence in armed conflicts, as provided for under resolution 1820 (2008).

The promotion of women's rights is at the core of the European Union's policy and is one of the main priorities of the French presidency of the Union. In this context, as Ms. Alberdi said just now, France took the initiative to organize, on 10 October in Brussels, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the European Commission, a conference on the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

Presided by the French Secretary of State for Human Rights, the conference brought together representatives of member States, military authorities, international institutions and non-governmental organizations. At that meeting, the European External Affairs Commissioner pointed out her recent initiative to propose to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that we organize in 2010 a ministerial conference on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

This conference enabled us to assess the achievements of the European Union and the steps that it plans to implement. When defining the mandate of the European Security and Defence Policy missions, the component on protecting women and girls in armed conflict will be strengthened and, with regard to security sector reform, the participation of women at all levels of the judicial, army and police sectors must be ensured. On the operational level, gender advisers in missions must be involved in the missions' planning phase, and the participation of women, particularly in command structures, will be increased. Once on the ground, local women's networks must be consulted and their contributions will go freely up the command chain.

These specific recommendations will, under the French presidency of the European Union, enable the implementation of a process to assess and revise European Union policies and documents on the protection of women in armed conflict.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the determination of the European Union to work in partnership with all interested countries and organizations for the cessation without further delay of violence against women in armed conflict. The European Union calls on the United Nations and its operational partners to pursue and accelerate the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): I appreciate the opportunity to address the Council on the issue of women and peace and security. The United States reiterates its commitment to working with others to prevent the use of sexual violence as a tactic of warfare and to ensure the full participation of women in peace processes and at all decision-making levels of the United Nations.

Today, I would like to make two points. First, while we have made progress, it is imperative that the United Nations do more and continue to keep the issue of women and peace and security in the spotlight. Rape is a crime and sexual violence has a grievous moral and psychological impact, damaging not just the lives of individuals and families, but also communities and entire societies.

However, through greater awareness and action, the international community is responding. For example, in recent months, the Congolese Government, in conjunction with organizations like the American Bar Association and the United Nations, has instituted programmes that have contributed to a decrease of sexual violence and dramatic increases in prosecutions. Even so, women, especially women in rural villages, are not safe. Protection and assistance for victims of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict remain an essential part of the solution. The United Nations has made laudable steps, but must do more. It is especially important to eradicate sexual exploitation by peacekeepers.

The United Nations must also do more to factor the issue of women, peace and security into development portfolios across various sectors, including health, education, democracy and governance, and economic growth.

We must continue to address human trafficking, especially in conflict situations, where women and girls are often abducted by militia and turned into slaves or war wives. That is why the attention of the Council to this issue is so important. Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) address sexual violence and exploitation in conflict situations more forcefully than ever before. Resolution 1820 (2008) in particular requires the Secretary-General to report on specific situations in which sexual violence has been widely or systematically employed against civilians in such situations. The United States is pleased that the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), with its expertise on conflict situations, will be contributing to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the resolution.

We recommend that DPKO draw on the inter-agency resources of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, so that the wide range of experts and observers in the field can gather the sensitive information necessary to identify and combat sexual violence as an instrument of war.

Secondly, we must also increase women's participation in all aspects of building peace and security. Resolution 1820 (2008) recognizes and highlights the need for those essential contributions, but also points out that there is not adequate participation of women in peace negotiations and processes. The United States believes that ensuring the full participation of women in peace processes and the increased representation of women at all decision-making levels are essential.

Positive steps have been taken. For example, in 2006, female foreign ministers and other high-ranking officials from around the world, including United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, formed a Women Leaders' Working Group. The Group works to ensure that the issues of women's political participation, access to justice, economic empowerment, poverty reduction, combating violence against women and women in conflict and post-conflict situations get high-level international attention. The Group has also made efforts to promote the appointment of senior women as special representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General.

Last May, the United States launched a public-private partnership called The One Woman Initiative that focuses on women's entrepreneurship, leadership and the rule of law. The United States Government and private donors have provided $100 million in funding and the first grant will be rewarded in November. Also this year, the United States hosted a senior round table

for women's justice at which judges from around the world addressed women's lack of access to justice and discussed best practices to combat violence against women and improve women's legal enfranchisement. The activities ranged from the contribution by Avon Products of $1 million to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, to a programme that will bring 23 Malawi federal judges to the United States this fall for training on issues related to violence against women.

The United States welcomes the conclusion of the Secretary-General's report, which states that the deployment of women in field facilities engaging with civilians will lead to more access for women and girls to appropriate services and lower the incidence of sexual violence and abuse. We also applaud efforts by nations such as Jamaica to include an equal number of women and men in their United Nations peacekeeping contingents.

The United Nations would like to commend Secretary-General Ban for his leadership and commitment to increasing the number of women candidates for United Nations special representative and envoy positions. At present, 15 of the 37 United Nations senior leadership positions are held by women. The United States hope that those appointments will continue to increase and that empowerment issues become more prevalent in the country-specific reports to the Council.

At the same time, however, we recognize that women continue to be underrepresented in peace negotiations. As was mentioned by Ms. Taylor, according to a study by the United Nations Development Fund for Women, which was released last night, only 2.7 per cent of signatories of the 13 agreements they reviewed were women. When information on negotiations was available, there was no female lead negotiator and women's participation in negotiating delegations averaged only 7 per cent. The United States looks forward to working with Council members and the international community to greatly improve those numbers.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on the implementation of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Let me also thank Special Adviser Mayanja, Under-Secretary-General Le Roy, Executive Director Alberdi and Ms. Taylor for their statements.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

The adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) in June was a milestone in the Security Council's efforts to protect women and a major step forward in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Resolution 1820 (2008) clearly states that sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, when used as a war tactic, is a matter of peace and security and is therefore a responsibility of the Security Council. That aspect was clearly and well-underlined by Executive Director Alberdi.

Women cannot participate effectively in decision-making processes unless their security is guaranteed, abuses are prosecuted and blanket amnesties are kept off the table. Tragically, sexual violence continues to be used as a weapon of war to destroy the very fabric of society.

The Secretary-General's report foreseen by next June is therefore crucial. We believe that it should include detailed information on sexual violence in conflict situations that are on the Council's agenda, particularly on perpetrators and, more generally, on emerging patterns.

While resolution 1820 (2008) was a major step in implementing the protection pillar of resolution 1325 (2000), action is also needed on other pillars. We thus welcome the President's initiative to focus today's debate on women's participation. As the Secretary-General indicates in his report, "in most conflict and post-conflict societies women remain excluded from conflict prevention and gender-based early warning indicators are largely ignored" (*S/2008/622, para. 38*). Far too often, women are excluded from negotiating tables in peace processes, and that happens because of the lack of political will and of adequate resources.

The participation of women in all phases of conflict resolution and peacebuilding has a clear and vast potential. I think, for example, of the participation of Somali women as a "sixth clan" in the National Reconciliation Conference and of the key contribution of Burundi's women to the Arusha process. As that last example shows, the participation of women in the peace process since its inception has been a main factor

in encouraging a relevant segment of Burundi's civil society to develop remarkable leadership skills, to become a more effective political actor, and to be perceived as a legitimate participant in national recovery efforts.

This is not just a question of how many women are included in a political or decision-making process; it is about enabling them to champion issues that are also vital to their empowerment. That is possible only through the full engagement of civil society and women's organizations. We should, at the same time, consider women's resource needs, such as training and capacity-building programmes.

In that area, the United Nations can contribute to further progress by, for instance, considering how the participation of women can be better reflected in peacekeeping mission mandates and by providing those missions with needed expertise and resources.

Other practical steps that could also be considered are the appointment of more women as the Secretary-General's special representatives or envoys, the inclusion of a gender component in all United Nations peacekeeping and political missions and the establishment of structured gender expertise in the mediation capacities of the Department for Political Affairs. In the same light, we believe that creating a strengthened and consolidated United Nations entity for women is of critical importance.

The Peacebuilding Commission has proved that it can make a difference by redressing inequalities and creating the conditions for sustainable development on solid, non-discriminatory foundations. It does so through the inclusion of gender perspectives in its integrated peacebuilding strategies. The Commission must continue to engage women's organizations in every phase of its work, ensuring their full involvement in the planning, elaboration and monitoring of its integrated strategies.

Women are key social, political and economic actors in ensuring the success of stabilization and rebuilding efforts. Every time a success is achieved in a rebuilding effort, there is a critical presence of the women's segment of society. At the same, women are stakeholders who, more than others, face discrimination. My Government, in its full commitment to women's rights, would like to reaffirm on this occasion its commitment to promoting the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in all United Nations forums.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Ms. Inés Alberdi, Ms. Sarah Taylor and Mr. Alain Le Roy for the very useful information that they provided, and we thank the Secretary-General for the preparation of his thematic report (S/2008/622).

Resolution 1325 (2000) remains our most important guideline in enhancing the role of women in conflict prevention and settlement, post-conflict rehabilitation and the protection of women's rights during conflicts. We must implement the resolution's provisions by creating equal opportunities for women to participate actively in all peacekeeping and security efforts and in enhancing their role in decision-making. To that end, we must ensure genuine overall gender equality. Therefore, efforts in that area should be undertaken not only by the Security Council, but also by other relevant United Nations organs, including the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women.

Women can make an even greater contribution to conflict prevention and settlement in all their aspects. In post-conflict rehabilitation, we must make broader use of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a fundamental document. We must also devote greater attention to gender mainstreaming in United Nations efforts to reduce poverty and address inequality as sources of conflict. Here, we could refer to, inter alia, increased participation by women in decision-making on social and economic issues and in establishing national frameworks for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

We welcome the concrete steps taken by the United Nations system to guarantee the exercise of women's rights. We believe that there is a need to make more active use of the expertise of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. At the same time, we note that the Secretary-General's report does not provide a comprehensive response to the Council's earlier question regarding the impact of armed conflict on women and girls in situations on the Council's agenda. Only one page is devoted to that very important topic, and a whole set of serious issues is simply overlooked. Another issue, the protection of

women in armed conflict, is virtually reduced to the problem of sexual violence, while other crimes against women are ignored. Such an approach significantly reduces the tasks mandated by resolution 1325 (2000). From the perspective of the Security Council's Charter objectives, it should focus first and foremost on the most pressing, large-scale armed conflicts.

The United Nations should, as a priority, respond to systematic mass violence against women and children. Equal attention should be given to all categories of such violence in conflicts. Of serious concern are cases in which women and children are killed or injured, including as a result of the indiscriminate or excessive use of force. Unfortunately, recent examples of that can be found in many parts of the world. Such crimes often go unpunished or are justified by citing the unavoidable nature of so-called collateral damage. We believe that the Council should assess such cases in an unbiased and principled manner.

It is important that gender mainstreaming in United Nations work, including in the field, yield concrete results in the protection and advancement of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict societies. That requires balanced system-wide approaches that provide, first and foremost, for the full participation of women themselves in those processes.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me join other speakers in thanking Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Ms. Inés Alberdi, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women; and Ms. Sarah Taylor, Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for their important statements. Of course, we also wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this very important debate on women and peace and security.

Armed conflict is the single most crucial factor exacerbating the security of women. In an age in which international cooperation is closely wedded to international humanitarian law, it is unacceptable that widespread grave violence against women in armed conflicts continues to be perpetrated. That must be put to an end. The international community has the obligation to protect and assist women in armed conflicts.

Not least, the international community has every interest in ensuring the full involvement of women in all stages of the peace process and peacebuilding: women as peacemakers and women as peacebuilders. In an era in which opportunities and knowledge are abundant, we find that women's potential contributions to conflict resolution processes have not been adequately harnessed. Women's perspectives and contributions have been grossly underutilized. That produces an enormous deficit in our common efforts.

To exclude or omit women's participation in the conflict resolution process undermines the representativity of the efforts of major stakeholders as well as the achievement of a sustainable peace based on the inclusion of all perspectives. Thus, increasing women's opportunities to participate in various stages of the peace and conflict resolution process demands our full support.

While providing such space for increased opportunities is desirable and important, it is also vital to provide beforehand an ample space in which women can make their own choices; a space in which women can feel secure and free from the harm of violence and reprisal; a space in which women can enjoy the freedom to make informed decisions for their own lives; a space for each and every woman in armed conflict situations, in which her basic need for personal safety is met. In other words, our approach should be to view women not only as a group, but also as individuals with their own aspirations.

A woman can make a fundamental difference in the peace process if she has the necessary negotiating tools at her disposal, the necessary space to participate and to use her tools, and the support of her own constituents. It is from that perspective that Indonesia views the strengthened participation of woman in peace processes. Capacity-building is the core component for ensuring that women's participation will yield the fruit of success.

There are at least three aspects of the strengthening of women's participation in the peace process. First, it is imperative to promote gender balance and equity in the process of assembling a negotiating team and to highlight the concerns of women in the negotiating agenda.

Secondly, while high-level negotiations are central and indeed critical, attention must be paid to the situation on the ground. Women's participation

needs to be structured at the grass-roots level in order to promote sustainable peace. Women can advocate the pursuit of formal peace processes and cultivate community support for such efforts and their implementation.

Thirdly, women's participation can also be fostered by efforts that take the form of a campaign model based on democratic political campaigning and canvassing designed to increase participation by willing parties.

Before concluding my remarks, let me stress that enhancing women's participation in peace processes requires sustained and long-term efforts. Indeed, eight years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), there is certainly no shortage of action plans. We believe that it is timely to proceed beyond plans to actual actions. Indonesia, for its part, will redouble its efforts at the national level and here at the United Nations in pursuit of that important objective.

In conclusion, let me express our support for the adoption of the draft presidential statement that is before the Council, which we are hopeful can contribute to the enhancement of women's participation in peace and security on its own merits.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): May I begin by thanking Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Inés Alberdi, of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and Ms. Sarah Taylor, of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. Their contributions to this meeting have been invaluable.

I have the honour to address the Security Council today on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), namely, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia and my own country, South Africa.

SADC takes this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document S/2008/622, which provides an assessment of measures taken to enhance the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. We also take note of the assessment on the progress made in the protection of women against sexual and gender-based violence. The report also refers to resolution 1820 (2008) on sexual violence in conflict situations, which was unanimously adopted by the Council not long ago.

While women may be the first casualties of war, they remain active agents of change and play a meaningful role in the recovery and reintegration of their families. Women are also instrumental in bringing about democracy and reconciliation in post-conflict societies. It is for that reason that SADC welcomes this opportunity, on the eighth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), to participate in this open debate on the theme of "Women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security". This meeting provides us yet another opportunity to assess the concrete and specific efforts made in the implementation of the resolution at all levels and the role of the Security Council in such efforts.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is one of the founding principles of SADC and is enshrined in the SADC Treaty of 1992. We have been greatly honoured by the leadership and important contributions of women in recent peace processes and negotiations in our region. We also take pride in the fact that, throughout our history, the women of Southern Africa have played a pivotal role in the liberation movements that brought about independence and democracy to many of our countries.

In our resolve to mainstream a gender perspective into all aspects of our lives, SADC heads of State signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development on 17 August 2008. That instrument has been hailed as an important step towards the empowerment of women, the elimination of discrimination and the achievement of gender equality and equity. In the context of peace and security, the Protocol stipulates that States parties shall endeavour to put in place measures to ensure that women enjoy representation and participation in key decision-making positions in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes by 2015, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000).

Furthermore, the Protocol specifies that, in time of armed conflict, States parties shall take such steps as are necessary to prevent and eliminate incidents of human rights abuses, especially of women and children, and ensure that the perpetrators of such

abuses are brought to justice before a court of competent jurisdiction. Sexual violence in conflict situations is inextricably linked to gender inequality. We therefore need to advocate more strongly for the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts aimed at maintaining and promoting peace and security.

While SADC acknowledges that women and civil society organizations have been the driving force behind our efforts and achievements, we are committed to continue to strengthen efforts to address the challenges of peace and security for women. We therefore welcome the seriousness with which the Security Council continues to address the question. In that connection, SADC believes that there is a need for women's increased representation and participation at all levels, particularly in peacekeeping and peacebuilding and within United Nations field-based operations. Recommendations by the Security Council — such as to provide gender-sensitive training, establish gender components in peacekeeping operations, deploy more women peacekeepers and appoint more women as special representatives and special envoys of the Secretary-General — should be implemented. SADC urges the Secretary-General to strengthen his efforts to identify suitable female candidates for senior positions, including in the military and police services. In addition, Member States should nominate women candidates for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster, as called for by resolution 1325 (2000).

From our experience in SADC, we have learned that it is important to build solidarity among all stakeholders, particularly women. We therefore remain committed to working within a consultative and collaborative framework to find peaceful solutions to conflicts. To that end, we believe it would be important for women in local communities to be allowed to participate in finding solutions for the reconstruction and rebuilding of their countries. The equal need for the representation and participation of women in formal peace processes and at the negotiating table cannot be overemphasized. As the ones who are the first to suffer when there is conflict, women are often the ones who know when and how to rebuild the lives of their communities. Women should therefore be at the forefront of developing and implementing post-conflict strategies and programmes.

In conclusion, I wish to state that SADC remains committed to the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We, as the international community, have an obligation to women the world over to ensure that their rights are promoted and their place in all aspects of the peace process is assured. It is their equal participation and their full involvement that will contribute to the effective maintenance and promotion of sustainable peace and security.

Mr. Suescum (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of China for convening this important debate. My thanks go also to Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Ms. Inés Alberdi, Ms. Sarah Taylor and Mr. Alain Le Roy for their detailed presentations on the progress made and the challenges facing us in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

Over the past eight years, the Security Council has closely followed the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/622) clearly indicates that the overall peace and security architecture of the United Nations has been more sensitive to women's needs in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict societies. However, a noticeable gap remains between policies and their implementation, and we need to do more to mainstream gender perspectives in conflict prevention and resolution as well as in peacebuilding. Full participation and involvement by women in all peacebuilding efforts and in the promotion of peace and security increase the likelihood of success and sustainability in these processes and of post-conflict stability.

That obliges the international community and, in particular, the Security Council to focus their efforts on including women in peace processes to the greatest extent possible. To that end, a number of creative ways to involve women in peace processes have been identified over the past few years, and we must make a careful effort to document and promote such models so that they can be reproduced and adapted to each specific situation.

In our view, it is critical to include women in negotiations and in the preparation of the strategies and objectives of mediators. That will facilitate the analysis of men's and women's differing needs, interests and links to power in a particular conflict situation, of the inequalities between them and of their roles in society.

We are not suggesting the imposition of a quota for women in such processes; we want to promote the greatest possible impact of their participation on outcomes and their implementation.

It is also essential to enhance women's participation and the consideration of women's needs in peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations across the board. In many cases, for example, we ignore the gender dimension in the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. That means that women and girl fighters prefer to remain armed, absent protection and absent incentives to do otherwise.

To achieve all of those objectives, professionals involved in mediation and peacebuilding should have the tools they need to mainstream the gender perspective in their work. Reports of the United Nations and of various early warning mechanisms would benefit from the identification and analysis of empirical data disaggregated by gender and other key factors. Sources for such indicators are limited and in some cases non-existent. For that reason, as mandates are carried out, Security Council members and, in particular, donor countries should provide the technical and financial resources required for the preparation and exchange of such information.

It is indispensable to understand that gender equality is not the same as strict equality between men and women; rather, women and men must have the same opportunities to exercise their rights and meet their responsibilities. If we understand and support that principle, women will be able to better play their role as essential agents in the promotion of peace and development.

Mr. Belle (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to convene this public debate on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and on the issue of promoting women's participation in peace processes. I also thank Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Ms. Inés Alberdi, Ms. Sarah Taylor and Mr. Alain Le Roy for their introductory briefings.

Belgium aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

Before turning to the specific issue of the participation of women in peace processes, I wish to voice the view that, eight years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we should ask ourselves — as Ms. Taylor has asked — about our implementation of that resolution. Despite the efforts of the United Nations system, described in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/622), and the efforts we have all made, the resolution's objectives have not been attained. The situation of women in conflict and post-conflict zones remains worrisome — indeed, tragic. The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in its entirety is the duty of all Member States, and their role and responsibility are vital.

By the end of this year, Belgium will present its action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The preparation of the action plan, in consultation with civil society, has been an enriching experience for all the Belgian political and administrative entities involved. The drafting of the plan has revealed a series of challenges both internally and with respect to our multilateral activities. For example, we have seen that the gender dimension must be mainstreamed in our fight to achieve a ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster bombs, whose primary victims are women and children.

At the internal level we have seen that good gender-equality legislation alone has not been sufficient. Even though they may reflect firm political will, legislative texts must be combined with investment in know-how in the sphere of gender issues if they are to be implemented effectively.

We all agree that we need a better balance — parity — between women and men in international organizations, especially in the highest positions. To achieve that, more women must show their readiness to accept such high-level posts. In this, they must be encouraged and, above all, supported. As part of its policy on applications for international posts, Belgium actively encourages women candidates.

You were entirely right, Mr. President, to place the issue of the participation of women in peace processes at the heart of our debate. Resolution 1325 (2000) recognizes and stresses the need to involve women in all aspects and phases of the transition in countries emerging from conflict, as well as in the peace process itself, in restoring the rule of law and in rebuilding economic systems.

One cannot restore lasting peace without the involvement of women. Ms. Mayanja pointed that out eloquently. We must involve women to a much greater extent in specific issues that arise at the end of a conflict. It is important that women are able not simply to state their needs, including with regard to justice and reconstruction; they must also be able to participate genuinely in the decision-making process.

Peacekeeping missions have the responsibility to ensure that the place of women in peace processes is assured. From the outset of a mission, the community of women at the local level, on the ground, and, where they exist, women leaders must be encouraged and invited to defend and present their opinions and to participate in public decisions. The Security Council has an important role to play in that respect. Under-Secretary-General Le Roy also indicated that in his briefing.

Allow me to conclude by recalling resolution 1820 (2008), which deals with the problem of sexual violence in armed conflicts. In its condemnation of the use of all forms of violence and sexual violence against civilians, that resolution, as Ms. Alberdi said, is an essential complement to resolution 1325 (2000). The scourge of sexual violence must be eliminated without delay. For Belgium, that remains the priority in our overall implementation of the resolution on women, peace and security.

Mr. Tiendrébéogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): We should like to express our gratitude to your delegation, Mr. President, for having organized this debate on the full-fledged and equal participation of women in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and security efforts. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2008/622) and Ms. Mayanja for presenting it this morning. We are just as grateful to Mr. Le Roy, Ms. Alberdi and Ms. Taylor for their important contributions.

The regular review of the state of implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) testifies to the interest of the Security Council and the international community in this important issue. It is comforting to note that there has been significant progress since the resolution was adopted, including the setting up of increasingly effective legal and institutional frameworks that are the expression of the constantly growing awareness of the importance of the contribution that women have made and could make to peacekeeping and the promotion of peace. Even better, the need to take into account women's specific needs before, during and after conflicts is now part and parcel of strategies and plans for preventing and emerging from crises and for reconstruction and peacebuilding. That is to the credit not only of Member States but of the United Nations — to whose leadership we should pay tribute — and of regional and subregional organizations, as well as of many civil society organizations.

However, significant as that progress is, it cannot mask the reality — the reality that the results of women's participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding is far from what was expected and that many challenges, such as sexual violence of all types and impunity, remain to be met before resolution 1325 (2000) is truly and fully implemented. We are all the more concerned by this reality because we are but a few days away from the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is now recognized that the systematic involvement of women in negotiation and mediation efforts, in the elaboration of peace agreements and in reconstruction and reconciliations strategies is essential. The Security Council has reaffirmed that on many occasions. It did so quite recently, on 23 September, on the occasion of its 5979th meeting, the high-level meeting on mediation as a peaceful way to settle conflicts.

The involvement of women involves a collective and shared responsibility.

It is an individual responsibility, for we must rid ourselves of certain prejudices and other demeaning concepts regarding the place and role of women in society. Indeed, it is no secret that the challenge of socio-cultural inertia in this regard is often one of the most difficult challenges to take on.

It is a responsibility of States and parties to conflicts, as they have the primary obligation to ensure the protection of women and their involvement in the search for solutions to crises and to mainstream the concept of women, peace and security and to strive to ensure its effective implementation. Among other things, we call for strengthening women's capacities, especially in the techniques of negotiation and mediation, as well as strengthening the female components of military and police contingents in peacekeeping operations.

It is a responsibility of United Nations bodies and subregional and regional organizations, which must further strengthen the use of women's peacemaking and negotiating talents. That means, inter alia, enlarging the female component of representatives, envoys and heads of offices — all key elements of the good offices of those organizations, without forgetting an increase in the number of women decision makers at all levels. To illustrate, the African Union included in its Constitutive Act the obligation to take gender equality into account in its programmes and activities, while the gender aspect is a reality in the composition of the Commission of the African Union. As to the Economic Community of West African States, it has elaborated a plan of action on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

It is a responsibility of civil society, an outstanding partner and a relay in the dissemination of good practices in the promotion of gender issues. In many crisis situations it has amply proven its ability to transcend passion and partisan approaches to mobilize energy for peace.

Finally, it is a responsibility of women themselves, who must set up national, regional and international solidarity networks to share experiences and strengthen their capacities. In that way they will be in a position to contribute to setting up platforms and reference frameworks for the participation of women in peace processes.

My delegation pays tribute to the pertinence of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report regarding accelerating the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Those that address the Security Council deserve the greatest attention, given the role this body plays in the maintenance of international peace and security. We especially invite the Council to step up its cooperation with Member States and subregional and regional organizations and to make more frequent use of the Arria Formula, which will enable it to better consolidate the foundations of some of its actions and decisions.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) represents an important stage in the collective will of the international community to promote the rights and interests of women. However, it should not be regarded as an end in itself. In other words, we should not be satisfied by simple regular reviews. Only genuine political will coupled with concrete commitment to peace will make possible the achievement of the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000). The United Nations overall, and the Security Council in particular, have a central role to play in that regard, which they must continue to discharge fully.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): Croatia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2008/622) and the recommendations contained therein. We thank the delegation of China for organizing what is, for us, a timely debate. I would also like to thank Ms. Mayanja, Ms. Alberdi, Mr. Le Roy and Ms. Taylor for their valuable participation in today's debate.

The focus of today's debate is "Women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security". In that respect, my delegation would like to emphasize several points.

To begin with, it should be emphasized that in many countries suffering from armed conflict, women peacebuilders are often faced with male-dominated institutions. Those women work under difficult conditions and the space given to their issues is often negligible. Women's issues tend to be organized separately from other issues of post-conflict civil society and their associated support groups, which would explain why the issues of women's empowerment and gender-based violence are easily overlooked, making it easier to exclude women from decision-making structures that could enhance their security.

There has not been enough research conducted on the cross-border dimensions of armed conflict that stem from the uncontrolled movement of armed forces and groups across poorly patrolled frontiers, especially in places like the Sudan and the region around the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since no formal cross-border networks exist among women's peacebuilding groups, we believe that women's participation in regional peacebuilding institutions, such as the Amani Forum in the Great Lakes region, could be encouraged through, for example, the establishment of a task force to examine women-specific cross-border concerns.

The expansion of women's roles as peacebuilders is achievable, notwithstanding negative views on social change that may arise following armed conflict and a tendency by male-dominated societies in post-conflict

regions to undermine the new roles women can play in helping to resolve conflicts and associated violence. Consideration should be given to including marginalized men, such as former combatants or those in refugee or internally displaced persons camps, in our efforts to support women's equal participation in peace processes, while Governments should ensure that traditional practices are not misused by men to control women or to violate their rights.

The United Nations, national Governments and individual donors should listen closely to the views of women's civil society organizations. Such organizations need in turn to receive their fair share of professional education and support. It is a Government's obligation to fulfil its responsibilities to establish and maintain women-friendly security, health and education services.

Women activists in many parts of the world suffering from armed conflict are struggling in their efforts to bring public attention to the fact that women and children, including infants, face extremely high levels of violence, including sexual violence and abuse by men. The ongoing effects of such violence long after war is over should be a primary concern of those who advocate the greater inclusion of women in peacebuilding institutions. Strategies to prevent violence against women during armed conflict should also include strategies to protect women's participation in reconstruction and democracy-building projects in its aftermath. We believe therefore that the Security Council should ensure the prompt and effective implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

Although many women were victims in the wars that took place in South-East Europe, they also had an active role in opposing armed conflict and in building understanding and peace among the national groups of our region. For example, during the aggression committed against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s, when Croatia played host to over 300,000 internally displaced persons and as many refugees, women's non-governmental organizations played an important role in providing psychological help, organizing humanitarian activities and establishing shelters for refugees and displaced persons, regardless of their ethnic background. Similarly, the first attempts to initiate dialogue among the different sides in the conflict came from women and their organizations.

Croatia, as a troop- and police-contributing country, is fully aware of the ongoing efforts aimed at improving the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the necessity of increasing the deployment of more women in peacekeeping missions. Croatia also uses sex-disaggregated data in order to better monitor and track progress in its reports on levels of military deployments to peacekeeping operations. Finally, Croatia will continue actively contributing to the goals of resolution 1325 (2000) and beyond.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I thank you, Sir, and the Chinese delegation for convening this debate of the Security Council on women and peace and security, with a focus on the participation of women in all stages of the peace process. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2008/622) on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), to which Viet Nam attaches great importance. I also thank all the invited speakers for their meaningful contributions.

Women account for more than half of the world's population. Families cannot be homes without women playing a key role in maintaining and nurturing them. Societies cannot be peaceful communities without the vital participation of women. My delegation commends the measures that the United Nations has taken over the past years in promoting the role of women in peace and security in many parts of the world, particularly in conflict areas. Most notable among those measures have been the adoption by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of directives and plans on gender equality in peacekeeping operations; the integration of gender quality in planning, monitoring and the collection of data by humanitarian entities; and the development by many United Nations agencies of strategies to further mainstream gender into the mandates for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

My delegation is encouraged to see United Nations agencies, and especially peacekeeping missions, playing a more active role in promoting, through technical as well as financial assistance, women's participation in all stages of the peace process in many countries. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, there has emerged "a culture of gender equality and women's empowerment in peace and security areas" (*S/2008/622, para. 8*). We consider that trend to be encouraging.

My delegation remains preoccupied, however, by the fact that we are still far from able to ensure the full and equal participation of women in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding. In many societies, women are left inactive and with little chance to take part in decision-making processes, and are often excluded from activities related to peace and security. Women's representation in security institutions, law enforcement bodies and peace negotiation delegations has seen little improvement since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

We believe that the most effective way to enhance the participation of women in peace processes is to empower them both politically and economically. To that end, it is important to ensure their equal access to education and information, since that helps to raise their awareness of their own rights and equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in governance and economic activities and in peace processes. Gender mainstreaming needs to be strengthened in peace and security areas, with gender incorporated into all legislation, strategies and policies on conflict prevention and resolution, and reconstruction. That, in turn, will build foundations to back women's equal representation and leadership in peace and security institutions, while enlarging space for their participation in peace talks. The implementation of such efforts can and should be assisted by the United Nations through a wide range of measures, from legal and technical assistance to negotiation and leadership skills training programmes.

In Viet Nam women served in wartime as generals and peace negotiators. Our country now ranks third in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of the female ratio in the parliament membership and has had, for over two decades, a female Vice-President of State and several female Ministers. In every State or public institution there is a women's affairs committee that oversees and promotes the implementation of gender equality policies. Ensuring gender equality and empowering women has been and continues to be a major policy of the Vietnamese State and Government. We support and continue to implement resolution 1325 (2000) at all levels.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Eight years have passed since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Generally speaking, we are satisfied with the implementation of the resolution by the United Nations and on the national level by States throughout the world. However, the situation of women and girls in conflict zones remains a source of great concern, as shown in the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/622) submitted for our consideration today.

Resolution 1325 (2000) has helped a growing number of women to overcome the obstacles confronting them along the road to participation in decision-making processes, supported the promotion of women's rights and contributed to peace and security throughout the world. Shortcomings remain, however, in the implementation of the resolution, especially in conflict zones.

We recognize that the greatest share of responsibility for the implementation of the resolution lies with Member States. Indeed, the United Nations cannot provide for greater female participation in peacekeeping operations if Member States do not ensure that there are sufficient women candidates for peacekeeping missions. One cannot expect the promotion of women's rights and their advancement and protection in conflict areas and in other States if there are no national strategies for that.

We agree with the statement in the Secretary-General's report that there is no single agreed approach for dealing with the issue of the gender gap. We must take into account the specificities and needs of each State. We reaffirm yet again that it is the responsibility of States to adopt effective national legislation to promote the rights of women, to eliminate the culture of impunity and to encourage greater participation by women in decision-making processes. We should also undertake media campaigns and set up education programmes to raise awareness of women's rights and to eliminate cultural discrimination against them.

In terms of the African continent, we are satisfied to see the commitment shown by African States to promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, in conformity with the Constitutive Act of the African Union. We pay tribute to the progress achieved so far at the regional level. Indeed, a final draft of African Union policies for women has been elaborated with the assistance of civil society organizations. That final draft will be submitted to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in the preparations leading up to the declaration of the period from 2010 to 2020 as the African Decade for Women. We should also note that the recently established African Women's Rights

Observatory is an important tool to ensure follow-up in the enforcement of women's rights in Africa and to take into account the need to overcome the gender gap.

Despite all of those efforts by the United Nations, the African Union and individual States, we are seriously concerned by sexual violence against women in conflict areas, whether during conflict or in post-conflict situations. Effective prevention and response, in our view, requires comprehensive, coordinated and multidimensional long-term efforts involving all stakeholders. We believe that certain measures adopted by peacekeeping operations in conflict areas are effective and, to a large extent, contribute to preventing sexual violence against women. For example, there are policewomen deployed in conflict zones and 24-hour peacekeeping police patrols in refugee and displaced persons' camps.

When we refer to violence against women in conflict zones, we must bear in mind the violence and psychological terror visited upon Palestinian women suffering under Israeli occupation, in brazen violation of all the principles of international law. We can all imagine the terrible suffering of pregnant women who give birth at checkpoints because they are prevented from reaching hospitals. We can all imagine the suffering of thousands of women deprived of drugs and food and whose vital needs remain unmet, including in the Gaza Strip. We can all imagine the suffering of women who see their children killed before their eyes, or women whose children are arrested and then languish in Israeli jails without being brought to trial. I mention the suffering of the Palestinian women because, unfortunately, the Secretary-General's report made no mention of it.

We believe that a drastic solution to the problem of violence against women is to resolve conflicts, to settle them at the very outset, to ensure that peace prevails, to set up an effective and transparent security sector, to accelerate development in post-conflict States and to strengthen the role of women in all fields. That is something in which the United Nations specialized agencies can participate by providing assistance to national efforts towards women's advancement through the financing of education and training programmes focused as a priority on women and girls.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the support of my country for all of the recommendations included in paragraph 97 of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/622) to accelerate the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

Mr. Weisleder (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by thanking you, Sir, and your delegation for organizing this debate on such an important subject. I also wish to thank Ms. Rachel Mayanja for her briefing on the annual report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2008/622) and also the statements of Ms. Inés Alberdi, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and Ms. Sarah Taylor, Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women and Peace and Security. We also thank Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing.

Negotiation of peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction are nothing new for women, who are catalysts for national reconciliation. They strengthen development efforts and are fundamental factors in the restoration of stability in societies that have suffered the ravages of war. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) was the first recognition by the Security Council of the fundamental role that has been played historically by women in maintaining and restoring international peace and security. However, in most cases, the contributions of women have unfortunately been unofficial, far from the negotiation tables, and their potential to spread peace has been belittled or underestimated on far too many occasions.

The exclusion of women from the processes of conflict resolution and peacebuilding has an excessively high cost that we cannot afford. That exclusion not only weakens the effectiveness of conflict-prevention mechanisms, but also drastically reduces the opportunities for peacebuilding. It is important to remember that in traditional societies — in many cases that is where armed conflicts have taken place or are continuing — the role of women in the family and in society is absolutely pivotal. Lasting peace cannot be built based upon the status quo, which has allowed inequality and the imbalance of power to continue and has, in the majority of cases, been one of the deep-seated causes of conflict. The peace process must identify the specific needs of women and must appropriate the necessary resources to address them. Such a process would then produce enormous results for society. We must transform prejudices and patterns

of social discrimination and those laws and customs that are obstacles to the equal participation of women.

As Simone de Beauvoir said, one is not born a woman, but becomes one. But in order to change this, we must give explicit support to the participation of women, in particular in decision-making, so as to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) also represented a change of paradigm by placing women at the heart of the consideration of the issue, not just as victims but as engines for change forging their own destinies and as brave contributors to peace and development in societies suffering from armed conflict or emerging from conflict.

We must expand the role of women in negotiation, mediation, dialogue, constitution drafting, elections, reconstruction and justice. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/622) gives us various examples of success stories around the world, where the effective participation of women has borne fruit. That has been the case in some peacekeeping operations, where, as members of military observers or police forces, women have made it possible to increase security and to reduce incidents of sexual abuse, facilitating the involvement of other women and strengthening access to services. That is part of the purpose of the Secretary-General's report, and it is a balanced report.

However, we still lack sufficient political will and resources to promote the systematic participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The report of the Secretary-General disturbingly highlights the fact that only 2.2 per cent of military personnel in United Nations peacekeeping operations and 7.6 per cent of civilian police personnel are women. To date, our Organization has only one woman Head of Mission in one peacekeeping operation. It is crucial that we adopt essential measures to avoid gender violence in armed conflicts, in particular the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Reality as it exists for millions of women should be taken into account. We must offer them equal opportunities and we must identify their specific needs. In order to do that, we must break with the patterns of marginalization in protection and economic recovery and strength of democratic institutions, governance, justice, reform of the security sector and compliance with the rule of law.

Costa Rica considers that incorporation of the gender perspective is an indispensable tool for dealing with the terrible effects of conflict and is helpful too in conflict prevention. Women have the capacity to bring peace to all factions and to every home. For that reason, we should capitalize on their potential and work actively to include them in the processes and strategies for conflict resolution and the political tasks of the post-conflict period, because peace should not only be sustainable but above all, it must be inclusive, allowing everyone to enjoy its dividends on an equal footing.

Costa Rica does not want to idealize or to overburden women by exaggerating their capacities in those functions. However, because of the characteristic qualities of women, we are convinced that policies of gender equality and the inclusion of women constitute very important contributions in our efforts to avoid conflicts and to resolve them when they do occur.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): Let me join others in thanking you Sir, for holding this open debate on a very important issue. I would like to express my thanks, alongside my colleagues, for all the presentations that we have heard today, including from nongovernmental organizations, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General.

I would also like to say at the outset that we align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

The role of women in helping to break the conflict cycle is multifaceted. Legitimate conflict resolution and peacebuilding need a fully inclusive process. More importantly, however, women's full participation is a question of effectiveness and of success. Women bring important skills and perspectives to the substance of negotiations and to practical peacebuilding efforts on the ground. Peace processes in which women are fully engaged are more likely to generate lasting solutions. And yet, often the constituency of women is neither represented among the assembled parties during a peace process nor employed as mediators.

Despite this Council's recognition of the vital role that women can play in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution, the record of women's participation in peace processes since the adoption of

resolution 1325 (2000) is poor. We heard some welcome news from the Under-Secretary-General today about certain appointments of women to senior positions. But it remains the case that, remarkably, there are currently no women engaged as Special Envoys of the Secretary-General. The Council has very recently reiterated its concern about this, in its debate last month on mediation (see S/PV.5979). We hope that the report that was requested during that debate will address the reasons for this shortfall.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has talked of the challenge to peacebuilding in Liberia in the following terms:

> "My biggest fear is that a small group might succeed in trying to return us to conflict. It will always remain a fear until we have done enough in responding to the needs of the population."

It is clear that mobilizing and enabling all available human resources within a country emerging from conflict is key. That means giving women within civil society and government the room to manoeuvre, giving them a platform from which to engage and the means to make their perspectives heard, and ensuring that they know that they are being listened to. The full engagement of women on the ground, with the direct contribution that they make to the stability of a society, underpins the peacebuilding process. That has been demonstrated time and again in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The international community also needs to better mobilize its resources, human and financial, in support of post-conflict States. At the open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding in May (see S/PV.5895), my Foreign Secretary identified this urgent challenge. First, he stressed the need to strengthen the international community's ability to offer coordinated and well-managed support to national authorities, in order to ensure a common strategy to drive integrated political, security and development activities. Secondly, he saw a requirement for increased national and international civilian capacities to plan and implement stabilization and recovery efforts.

There is a pressing need for capable and talented personnel to fill those staffing and leadership positions. Against that backdrop, women appear to be a largely untapped resource. We hope that this issue will be addressed in the Secretary-General's report on post-conflict peacebuilding that was requested at the May debate, and we look forward to the appearance of that report.

In sixty years of United Nations peacekeeping, only seven women have held the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General. As colleagues have noted today, in terms of boots on the ground, a measurement from April this year put the percentage of women military personnel in United Nations operations at only 1.9. Yet many militaries, including that of the United Kingdom and other troop- and police-contributing countries, from the South as well as from the North, have a much higher percentage of women serving and very many more women in senior command positions. So why not the United Nations? This is not just a question of resources but also one of effectiveness. There is a rich seam of evidence to show that the presence of deployed women peacekeepers helps to make peacekeeping forces more approachable to a local population, and that in turn facilitates their work.

So we believe that we have to think creatively. Member States have a role to play in ensuring women's full and effective contribution during peace processes, in supporting local civil society efforts, in deploying more women in support of peace support operations and in identifying and proposing talented women for senior peacekeeping and peacebuilding positions. In turn, the United Nations needs to attract the appropriately qualified women from across the globe that we know are out there. This must be done for the credibility of conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes and to improve the likelihood of their success.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I thank participants for their statements: Ms. Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; Mr. Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Ms. Alberdi, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); and Ms. Taylor, Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Eight years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), which laid the foundation for cooperation by the international community in this field. We are pleased to see that, thanks to the joint

efforts by various intergovernmental organizations, regional and subregional organizations, Member States and civil society, the role of women in the prevention of conflicts, peace talks, peacekeeping operations and post-conflict reconstruction has been strengthened, and the concepts of gender equality and the empowerment of women have taken hold.

However, we must recognize the reality that as the characteristics of conflicts change and various complex factors become interwoven, resolution 1325 (2000) has yet to be fully implemented. In certain conflict situations, enormous suffering and pain continue to be inflicted on women. Unable to protect their personal security, women can hardly take an effective part in peace processes or political life. We attach great importance to this question and wish to stress the following three points.

First, the Security Council has a unique role to play in the question of women, peace and security and should strengthen its coordination and cooperation with other organs of the United Nations. As the organ that bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council should step up its efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts so that the root causes of women's suffering in war can be removed and their rights and interest protected to the greatest extent possible. As the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and UNIFEM have their respective mandates and roles for promoting the rights and interests of women, the Security Council should strengthen its coordination and cooperation with them and work together in addressing the relevant issues.

Secondly, efforts should be made to facilitate women's participation in every stage of peace processes so that a solid foundation can be created for consolidating the peace process and achieving lasting peace. We hope that the parties concerned will continue to work and to create an enabling environment for women's full participation and in-depth involvement. In recent years, the Secretariat has taken quite a number of positive measures to increase the number of female staff members and women appointed to senior posts. We expect to see more efforts in this direction in the future.

Thirdly, civil society should continue to be encouraged and supported in taking part in the protection of women. Many colleagues from non-governmental organizations work under difficult conditions in the field to protect the rights and interests of women. Their commendable work deserves our appreciation. China supports them in their continuing efforts to play a constructive role in the protection of women in armed conflict and encourages them to engage with and make recommendations to other organs of the United Nations, especially those that are directly concerned with women's issues.

At the initiative of the delegation of the United Kingdom, the Security Council will adopt a presidential statement at the conclusion of this open debate, in which the Secretary-General will be requested to submit a report on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by next October. We support that request.

It needs to be pointed out that only a few months ago the Council adopted resolution 1820 (2008), in which the Secretary-General is requested to submit a report on combating sexual violence. We hope that the Secretariat will enhance internal coordination and make the best possible use of the relevant information available to it, so as to submit a report of high quality to the Security Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Natalya Petkevich, Deputy Head of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Belarus.

Ms. Petkevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): There is a wise s traditional Slavic saying that goes: What the woman wants, the Lord wants. It is absolutely clear what the mother, the loving wife and the protector of the domestic hearth wants: safety, security, calm, stability, health and prosperity.

If one were to take a traditional approach to today's debate, it would be limited to the topic of women as potential victims. However, I believe that the problem needs to be addressed more broadly. Three equal, and I stress "equal", elements must be highlighted.

First, priority should be accorded today to strengthening the role of women in the making and implementation of decisions at a higher level. Secondly, of course, one cannot ignore the fact that women constitute the group most vulnerable to the

consequences of various types of violent conflict. Third is an element that is usually ignored — here, I refer to the factors that, on the one hand, turn women into potential victims of violence who must therefore be protected, while on the other hand preventing them from playing a full role in efforts to settle and prevent conflicts.

Those three components are mutually interlinked, and there is a need to work on them simultaneously. Only as a result of comprehensive work on all three tracks, with the efforts of the whole international community, will we stand to ensure progress in this field. The development of our civilization dictates the need to evolve approaches to each of those three elements.

I believe that members will agree with me that until very recently, the highest achievement in gender equality was access by women to education and to the right to vote. Today, gender equality means absolute parity in rights, in opportunities and, no less important, in the acceptance of that parity as something that is entirely natural.

It is not enough merely to speak of women's equality in the political system. It is particularly important to create a sustainable tradition of participation by women in the taking of important Government decisions that is not ornamental, not just a showcase.

In that respect, I am pleased to state that in the Republic of Belarus, the role of women is accorded priority importance. Here is one example. When the President of our country was asked what kind of parliament he would like to see, he said, "I would like to see an able one with a female face". Currently, one third of members of parliament are women, while in municipal government bodies, that figure is over 45 per cent.

With regard to the second element, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the development of our civilization is, unfortunately, accompanied by two entirely contradictory trends: on the one hand, progress and, on the other hand, degradation. How else can one assess a world where nature itself has been tamed but where trafficking in women and girls and the violence perpetrated against them still flourish? Moreover, violence is becoming one of the weapons of war. If the international community averts its eyes, that degradation can destroy or infect all other areas of a country's and a people's life.

In that regard, for a number of years, the Republic of Belarus has championed an initiative to develop a comprehensive United Nations plan of action to fight trafficking in persons. During the current session of the General Assembly, our delegation has submitted a draft resolution on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons (A/C.3/63/L.9). We associate ourselves with the proposal of the Secretary-General on the need to establish a mechanism to monitor violence against women and girls.

Whatever form violence takes, and regardless of whether it occurs during armed conflict or not, it must be prevented or punished. On another important issue that must not be ignored in that respect, in our view it would be useful to scrutinize at the national level any mechanisms for granting amnesty to individuals who have perpetrated such violence against women, as well as any other legislative instruments for reducing sentences, because it is very important that the punishment actually served be commensurate with the crimes that have been perpetrated.

Most important, the international community must not address only the consequences. It is especially important to eliminate the root causes, the conditions that give rise to conflict: the primacy of the use of force, exploitation, poverty, illiteracy, social inequality and a belief of one people's superiority over any other.

All of those elements are interconnected, and we are convinced that the global promotion of the participation of women at the highest level, including in intergovernmental coordination and peacebuilding, will undoubtedly have a positive impact on preventing the violation of the rights of women and girls.

By way of conclusion, I have one final remark. I would change one word in the title of today's debate: "Women *are* peace and security". I am sure that members will concur with me that such a small word significantly enhances clarity.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): First of all, the Philippines commends and congratulates you, Mr. President, and the Security Council for conducting this open debate on the issue of women and peace and

security. The Philippines also commends the Secretary-General for the preparation of the background report on this subject, contained in document S/2008/622.

At the outset, the Philippines draws attention to paragraph 4 of the report, under the heading: "Impact of armed conflict on women: critical themes and issues of concern":

> "Despite the Security Council's repeated appeals to respect the equal rights of women and their role in peace processes and in peacebuilding, millions of women and children continue to account for the majority of casualties in hostilities, often in flagrant violation of human rights and humanitarian law. In armed conflicts and post-conflict situations, women bear the brunt of shattered economies and social structures."

The succeeding paragraphs 6 and 7 detail the horrors of rape and sexual and physical violence women suffer in some parts of the world. At a time when the United Nations just celebrated the sixty-third anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter and Member States await the commemoration, on 10 December 2008, of the adoption and proclamation by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, these findings on the tragic conditions of women in crisis and conflict situations shock us, rend our hearts and prick our consciences.

The fifth paragraph of the report states that the overriding concern for women in crisis and conflict situations is their physical security and that of their children. Thus, the Philippines appreciates the role and contribution of the Security Council, acting within its mandate, in ensuring peace and security for women. At this time, where violence against women, particularly sexual violence, is increasingly being used as a deliberate and systematic weapon of war, it is extremely important that the Council remain seized of the issues of women in crisis and conflict situations. In this regard, the Philippines welcomes the adoption by the Council, in June, of resolution 1820 (2008), in which it recognizes sexual violence as a security problem when such violence is used or commissioned as a tactic of war.

The Secretary-General's extensive report on the efforts by Member States, United Nations entities and international and regional organizations offers much encouragement and hope. We commend these stakeholders for their gender-responsiveness, mainly guided by Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), as they tackle the complicated and complex issues of various conflict situations.

However, the report is also quick to admit that, despite these efforts, gender-based violence is still persistent and that the efforts to address this problem need to be improved and coordinated effectively.

The strategies inspired by resolution 1325 (2000) that are carried out by United Nations entities and other organizations have increased their impact on the ground. However, we would like to highlight the issue of the sustainability of successful results. In this respect, the United Nations should lead in giving more emphasis to the effective transfer of skills and capacities to the national and local authorities and civil society actors on the ground. This is important to enable enhanced national ownership of activities in support of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Although I speak about capacity-building, I should also stress that gender training and education in the context of conflict should include the sensitization of men and boys on their particular role in instilling a culture of gender equality and women's empowerment. Men, who are the predominant actors in conflicts, should be made aware that they themselves are the best agents to promote gender equality and to change a culture of impunity for violence against women to a culture of respect for the fundamental human rights of women.

While I have touched upon the role of men and boys in ending gender violence in conflict, I should also underscore that the role of women as agents of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction is at the heart of securing peace for women. Resolution 1325 (2000), which puts the spotlight on the role of women as active agents for their own peace, paved the way for a paradigm shift. The old paradigm saw women and girls as mere victims. Now, through resolution 1325 (2000), there is broad realization that women themselves are the key to preventing and resolving conflict. In order to make this happen, however, there should be affirmative action that promotes women's participation and leadership in decision-making. Unfortunately, even with our gains in the area of gender equality, women continue to be underrepresented in the processes, institutions and

mechanisms dealing with all aspects of conflict and the restoration of peace. Women should be provided the political space, along with the technical knowledge and capacities, needed to bring out their natural abilities as peacemakers, peacekeepers and problem-solvers.

I would also like to highlight the need for the United Nations to improve on its monitoring and reporting on gender issues in conflict situations. Inconsistent country-specific and thematic reports that have scarce information on gender issues in conflicts will not aid the Council's consideration. Thus, the Philippines welcomes the efforts of the Secretariat to improve the monitoring and reporting aspect, so that the Council can meaningfully and effectively assess situations and provide the necessary guidance. The support of Member States in this regard is indispensable.

In conclusion, it is clear that there remains a gap between our aspirations for women affected by conflict and the actions on the ground. This gap should never widen. It should be decreased through strategic international cooperation, particularly through regional approaches that maintain the focus on gender-based solutions to conflict. Accordingly, the Security Council should maximize its role as a catalyst for and an instrument of cooperation. It should take advantage of its prominent and unique role in the international community to rally more collaborative actions to support gender-responsiveness when dealing with the various dimensions of conflict. That would be another way to give authentic meaning to the forthcoming celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims in the opening paragraph of its preamble that

> "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate, and we thank those who have offered briefings this morning. As a delegation that has supported resolution 1325 (2000) in its entirety since it was adopted, we agree that progress towards achieving its major goals has been slow and uneven. That is particularly true with regard to the low number of women appointed as Special Envoys and the continuing underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes and in peacekeeping missions. Your concept paper, Mr. President, and the report of the Secretary-General make it clear that we must considerably strengthen our efforts in that respect. We hope that the input provided during this debate will finally, eight years after the adoption of the resolution, lead to significant improvements.

Appointing more women to leading positions would have a catalytic effect and truly empower women affected by armed conflict. It would strengthen the perception that women are stakeholders — as opposed to mere victims or aid recipients. A few years ago, our then Permanent Representative in New York, Ambassador Fritsche, headed a group of like-minded ambassadors that tried to work towards an increase in the number of women in such positions. The group met regularly to exchange views and met with the Secretary-General for joint lobbying efforts. It was later taken over by the United Kingdom representative, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, but their effort was thereafter discontinued.

Several years later, it is sad to note that almost no progress has been made. Despite repeated expressions of good intent from all sides, a single woman currently serves as Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and women account for 28 per cent of higher-category civilian staff in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. We therefore fully support and reiterate today the call addressed to the Secretary-General by the Women's Leaders Working Group to establish, as a matter of high priority, a mechanism to increase the number of women in such positions as United Nations Special Representatives and Envoys, as well as heads of peace operations.

Existing programmes to increase the leadership and peacemaking capacities of women must be further expanded. We also believe that the creation of a gender unit within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would contribute to that goal. With the adoption this year of Presidential No. Statement 36, the Security Council noted that women have an important role to play in mediation and the settlement of disputes. In particular at the grass-roots level, their role can be significantly more important than that of men. The Council must therefore institutionalize women's equal and substantive participation at all levels of peace processes and create mechanisms to monitor their equal participation systematically.

There is a clear link between an increase in women's participation in peacekeeping missions and the potentially lower level of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. Since girls and women in affected regions often associate uniformed personnel with sexual violence, a higher number of women participating in peacekeeping and police forces will dramatically enhance the access of victims to social and psychological services, including trauma counselling and information-sharing on sexual harassment, abuse and rape.

Most importantly, of course, those who are supposed to provide protection must not, under any circumstances, themselves become perpetrators. All acts of sexual violence committed by peacekeeping personnel, including sexual exploitation and child prostitution, are unacceptable. They heavily undermine the credibility and effectiveness of any peace operation, but also of the Organization as a whole. Zero tolerance can therefore be the only policy in that respect.

The ultimate goal must be that the attitude and behaviour of peacekeepers towards women can serve as a model for local communities. Furthermore, the mandates of peacekeeping missions must provide clear guidance, especially for commanders, on how to protect civilians, in particular girls and women, from sexual violence. Predeployment and on-mission training programmes must instruct police, security and humanitarian personnel on how to recognize and react to incidents of sexual violence.

Sexual violence is one of the most important aspects of resolution 1325 (2000). While it has always been part of armed conflicts, its systematic and targeted use in numerous situations today is not just a by-product of hostilities, or even just a war crime as recognized in the Rome Statute. It often is a method of warfare that aims to destroy the social fabric of communities in order to achieve political and military ends. It is against that background that we co-sponsored resolution 1820 (2008) on the protection of civilians from all forms of sexual violence.

We also welcome the adoption of presidential statement 2008/28 on children in armed conflict, referring to resolution 1820 (2008), and repeat our call for targeted sanctions against perpetrators of acts of sexual violence.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. In view of the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m. I would like to remind participants that statements should be limited to five minutes insofar as possible.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m.